CLAIMS

1. A method of stabilizing an electrolytically colored, anodized aluminum article against degradation by ultraviolet radiation comprising heating the colored article to a temperature above 300°F for a period to achieve such stabilization.

2. The method as recited in claim 1 in which said aluminum article is a sheet metal panel formed of an aluminum alloy of the AA5xxx series of alloy compositions and said heating period is in excess of 45 minutes.

3. The method as recited in claim 1 in which said aluminum article is a sheet metal panel formed of an aluminum alloy of the AA6xxx series of alloy compositions and said heating period is in excess of 45 minutes.

4. The method as recited in claim 1 in which said aluminum article is a sheet metal panel formed of an aluminum alloy of the AA6111 composition and said heating period is in excess of 45 minutes.

5. The method as recited in claim 1 in which said aluminum article is a sheet metal panel formed of an aluminum alloy of AA5083 or AA5657 composition and said heating period is in excess of 45 minutes.

6. A method of making an aluminum alloy article having a colored anodized surface in which the color is stabilized against degradation by ultraviolet radiation, said method comprising:

anodizing said surface of said article in an aqueous sulfuric acid bath to form a colorable anodized layer on said surface, said layer being characterized by porous crystalline columns of aluminum oxide;

electrolytically depositing metal particles in the pores of said anodized layer for coloring said layer; and

heating said colored layer at a temperature above 300°F for a period sufficient to stabilize said color layer against said radiation.

7. The method recited in claim 6 comprising sealing said colored layer before said heating step.

8. The method as recited in claim 6 in which said aluminum article is a sheet metal panel formed of an aluminum alloy of the AA5xxx series or AA6xxx series of alloy compositions and said heating period is in excess of 45 minutes.

9. A method of making an exterior vehicular aluminum alloy sheet metal body panel having a colored anodized surface in which the color is stabilized against degradation by ultraviolet radiation, said method comprising:

forming said body panel from an aluminum alloy sheet material chosen for the forming of said panel;

anodizing said surface of said formed panel in an aqueous sulfuric acid bath to form a colorable anodized layer on said surface, said layer being characterized by porous crystalline columns of aluminum oxide and having a thickness of 15 micrometers or greater;

electrolytically depositing metal particles in the pores of said anodized layer for coloring said layer; and

heating said colored layer at a temperature above 300°F for a period sufficient to stabilize said color layer against said radiation.